

Step Ten

NA Deep Dive · The Recovery Files

Continued Personal Inventory — The Maintenance Step

"We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Observe · Notice what's happening · Assess · Honestly evaluate · Correct · Promptly admit & amend

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Each reading is followed by its check-in questions and exercises, in the same order as the app. Your scored results are shown in the app.

PART 1 OF 5 · READING

What Is Step Ten? — The Maintenance Step

"We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Step Ten is where recovery becomes a way of life rather than a project with a finish line. Steps One through Nine are the foundation — they clear the wreckage of the past, establish a relationship with a Higher Power, and repair the damage done to self and others. Step Ten is the ongoing maintenance that ensures you never have to rebuild that foundation from scratch again.

The word "continued" is the most important word in this step. It signals that recovery is not a one-time event but an ongoing practice. You are now doing in real time what you once did looking backward. Instead of inventorying your entire life, you inventory each day.

For people in substance use disorder recovery, Step Ten addresses one of the most dangerous dynamics in long-term sobriety: the gradual, unconscious return to old patterns. Relapse is almost always preceded by a slow drift — resentments allowed to build, dishonesty creeping back in, self-centeredness returning to the driver's seat.

There are three types of inventory in Step Ten: the spot-check inventory (a pause in the moment), the daily inventory (end-of-day review), and the periodic longer-term review (monthly or quarterly). Together, these create a comprehensive system of self-examination that keeps you honest, aware, and growing.

Step Ten is not about perfection. It is about awareness and willingness. A good Step Ten day is not a day without mistakes — it is a day where the mistakes were noticed, owned, and addressed.

Reflection Questions

1. How do you currently practice Step Ten in your daily life? Is it structured or sporadic?

2. What does "continued" mean to you? How does it change your view of recovery as an ongoing process?

3. Can you identify a time when a slow drift could have been caught earlier by consistent Step Ten practice?

4. Which type of inventory — spot-check, daily, or periodic review — do you practice most? Which do you neglect?

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how honestly do you examine yourself each day? What would it take to increase that by one point?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 1 OF 5

Daily Self-Awareness & Monitoring

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I regularly pause throughout my day to check my emotional and mental state

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I can identify when my thinking becomes selfish, dishonest, or fear-driven in real time

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I notice when resentment begins building before it takes full hold

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I am aware of the difference between my character defects and character assets as they show up daily

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I recognize when I am rationalizing, justifying, or minimizing my behavior

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I pay attention to my motives — not just what I do, but why I do it

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I can distinguish between healthy self-reflection and obsessive self-criticism

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I am honest with myself about where I was wrong during the day, without denial or defensiveness

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

Spot-Check Inventory Trainer

Building the Muscle of In-the-Moment Awareness

Why This Matters

The spot-check inventory is your first line of defense. The thirty-second pause between stimulus and response prevents a minor disturbance from becoming a major problem.

Scenario 1: Someone cuts you off in traffic and you feel ...

TRIGGER SCENARIO

Someone cuts you off in traffic and you feel rage building

SURFACE EMOTION

Anger / Resentment

UNDERLYING PATTERN

Fear of not being respected, self-centeredness

Have you experienced this? What happened? What was YOUR part?

What would a healthy, recovery-centered response look like?

Scenario 2: A coworker gets praised for something you helped with and you feel bitter...

TRIGGER SCENARIO

A coworker gets praised for something you helped with and you feel bitter

SURFACE EMOTION

Jealousy / Resentment

UNDERLYING PATTERN

Fear of inadequacy, need for external validation

Have you experienced this? What happened? What was YOUR part?

What would a healthy, recovery-centered response look like?

Scenario 3: Your sponsor calls and you let it go to voice...

TRIGGER SCENARIO

Your sponsor calls and you let it go to voicemail because you "don't feel like talking"

SURFACE EMOTION

Avoidance / Isolation

UNDERLYING PATTERN

Fear of vulnerability, pride, dishonesty about current state

Have you experienced this? What happened? What was YOUR part?

What would a healthy, recovery-centered response look like?

Scenario 4: You tell someone "I'm doing great" when you a...

TRIGGER SCENARIO

You tell someone "I'm doing great" when you are actually struggling

SURFACE EMOTION

Shame / Dishonesty

UNDERLYING PATTERN

Fear of judgment, people-pleasing, image management

Have you experienced this? What happened? What was YOUR part?

What would a healthy, recovery-centered response look like?

Scenario 5: You agree to do something you don't want to d...

TRIGGER SCENARIO

You agree to do something you don't want to do, then feel resentful about it

SURFACE EMOTION

Resentment / Self-Pity

UNDERLYING PATTERN

People-pleasing, inability to set boundaries

Have you experienced this? What happened? What was YOUR part?

What would a healthy, recovery-centered response look like?

Scenario 6: You find yourself mentally rehearsing an argu...

TRIGGER SCENARIO

You find yourself mentally rehearsing an argument you want to have

SURFACE EMOTION

Anger / Fear / Control

UNDERLYING PATTERN

Resentment, need to be right, fear of the outcome

Have you experienced this? What happened? What was YOUR part?

What would a healthy, recovery-centered response look like?

Your Personal Spot-Check Scenarios

Identify three situations from YOUR life this week that could have benefited from a spot-check.

PERSONAL SCENARIO 1

What happened?

Describe the trigger moment...

What were you feeling? What defect was active?

Name the emotion and the underlying defect...

What would you do differently with a 30-second pause?

Describe the recovery-centered alternative...

PERSONAL SCENARIO 2

What happened?

Describe the trigger moment...

What were you feeling? What defect was active?

Name the emotion and the underlying defect...

What would you do differently with a 30-second pause?

Describe the recovery-centered alternative...

PERSONAL SCENARIO 3

What happened?

Describe the trigger moment...

What were you feeling? What defect was active?

Name the emotion and the underlying defect...

What would you do differently with a 30-second pause?

Describe the recovery-centered alternative...

PART 2 OF 5 · READING

Why Step Ten Matters: The Danger of Drifting

Step Ten exists because recovery is not static — it is dynamic, ongoing, and perpetually at risk of erosion. The disease of addiction does not pack up and leave when you complete Step Nine. It adapts. It finds new expressions. It whispers in subtler voices.

The greatest danger in long-term recovery is not a sudden, dramatic relapse — it is the slow, almost imperceptible drift back toward the patterns of thinking and behavior that made substances necessary in the first place. This drift has a predictable sequence: small compromises, unaddressed resentments, dishonest statements that go uncorrected. None seems dangerous in isolation. But they accumulate.

The NA fellowship calls this "building a case." Without awareness, the recovering addict begins accumulating evidence for why recovery isn't working, why just this once would be okay. Each unaddressed resentment, each uncorrected dishonesty becomes a brick in the wall between the person and their recovery. Step Ten is the daily demolition crew that prevents this wall from being built.

Step Ten combats this drift on multiple levels: it maintains awareness, accountability, humility, and connection. Perhaps most importantly, it maintains the spiritual condition upon which recovery depends. The spiritual awakening described in Step Twelve is not a permanent state — it is more like a campfire that must be tended daily. Step Ten is the act of adding fuel to that fire.

Reflection Questions

1. Can you identify a period of "drift" in your recovery? What were the warning signs you missed?

2. What does "building a case" look like for you? What kinds of resentments or justifications have you accumulated?

3. How has hedonic adaptation affected your recovery? Have you lost touch with early sobriety's gratitude?

4. Which dimension of Step Ten — awareness, accountability, humility, or connection — is most essential for you right now?

5. If you think of your spiritual condition as a campfire, what is its current state? What would it take to tend it today?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 2 OF 5

Recovery Maintenance & Spiritual Fitness

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I have a consistent daily routine that includes some form of inventory, prayer, or meditation

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I attend meetings or connect with recovery community regularly

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I stay in contact with a sponsor, mentor, or accountability partner

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I recognize the warning signs that I am drifting from my program before a crisis occurs

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I am willing to do the things I don't want to do when my recovery requires them

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I continue to grow spiritually rather than coasting on the work I did in early recovery

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I practice gratitude as a daily discipline, not just when things are going well

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I use Step Ten as a living practice, not just a concept I understand intellectually

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

Recovery Maintenance Plan

Your Personal Step Ten Blueprint for Daily Living

Making It Sustainable

Step Ten only works if you actually do it — consistently, daily, as a non-negotiable part of your life. This final exercise brings everything together into a concrete, personalized maintenance plan.

Morning Practice

1. What time will you begin your morning practice? (Be realistic — choose a time you can sustain.)

2. What will your morning practice include? (Prayer/meditation? Intention-setting? Reading?)

3. What is your intention for the day? How do you want to show up? What defects will you watch for?

4. Write your morning prayer, meditation, or intention statement — the words you will begin each day with.

Spot-Check Protocol

1. What are your personal triggers for a spot-check?

2. What will your spot-check process look like? Write out the steps: pause → identify → assess → correct.

3. How will you remind yourself to do spot-checks throughout the day?

4. Who can you call or text if a spot-check reveals something you cannot handle alone?

Evening Inventory

1. What time will you do your evening inventory? Where?

2. Will you write your inventory or reflect mentally? What format will you use?

3. What are the four questions you will ask yourself each evening?

4. How will you hold yourself accountable for doing this consistently?

Support Structure

1. Who is your sponsor or primary accountability partner? How often will you discuss your Step Ten practice?

2. How many meetings per week will you commit to? Which specific meetings?

3. Who are the three people you can call when you are struggling? (Name them. "Someone" is not a plan.)

4. What will you do when you miss a day of practice? What is the plan for getting back on track?

Your Step Ten Commitment Statement

Final Declaration

Having completed this intensive, you now have the knowledge, tools, and self-awareness to practice Step Ten as a living discipline. The final step is commitment — not to perfection, but to practice.

My Step Ten Commitment:

I commit to practicing Step Ten by... (Include your morning practice, spot-check process, evening inventory, and support structure.)

What is your "why"? Why is Step Ten essential to YOUR recovery? What happens if you don't do it?

Connect this commitment to your personal recovery. What is at stake?

PART 3 OF 5 · READING

The Practice: How to Actually Do Step Ten

Understanding Step Ten intellectually is necessary but insufficient. Step Ten is a practice — it requires action, consistency, and method.

THE SPOT-CHECK INVENTORY

The spot-check happens in the moment, triggered by any emotional disturbance — anger, fear, anxiety, resentment, dishonesty, selfishness. It is a brief, internal pause asking three questions: "What am I feeling right now?", "Why am I feeling this?", and "What is my part in this?" The entire process takes thirty seconds to two minutes.

Practical triggers for a spot-check: When your body tenses up. When you start mentally rehearsing an argument. When you catch yourself lying, exaggerating, or omitting. When you feel the urge to isolate. When you are about to make a decision based on fear.

THE DAILY INVENTORY

A thorough daily inventory addresses four domains:

- Where was I wrong today? (selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, fear)
- Where was I right today? (integrity, kindness, honesty, courage)
- What needs attention? (amends, conversations, wrongs to admit)
- What am I grateful for? (specific, concrete gratitude)

THE PERIODIC REVIEW

A deeper inventory done monthly, quarterly, or annually. It looks at patterns rather than individual events. Are the same character defects showing up repeatedly? Are there areas where growth has stalled?

THE WRITTEN DIMENSION

Writing is not optional in Step Ten — it is essential. The mind minimizes, rationalizes, forgets, and distorts. Writing forces honesty and creates a record that can be reviewed and shared.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of the three inventory types do you currently practice? Which do you avoid?

2. What are your most common triggers for a spot-check? Which emotional disturbances catch you off-guard?

3. If you conducted a daily inventory of today so far, what would it reveal?

4. How do you feel about writing your inventory? If you resist it, what is the resistance about?

5. What would it look like to commit to a seven-day trial of written daily inventory?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 3 OF 5

Promptly Admitting Wrongs

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. When I am wrong, I can admit it quickly rather than defending myself or waiting

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I apologize without qualifying it — no "I'm sorry, but..." or "I'm sorry you feel that way"

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I take responsibility for my part in conflicts without requiring the other person to acknowledge theirs first

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I can admit mistakes at work, in meetings, or in public without excessive shame

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I make amends in action, not just words — I change the behavior, not just apologize for it

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I do not let pride prevent me from acknowledging when I have been unfair, selfish, or dishonest

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. I address wrongs the same day rather than letting them accumulate

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. I can accept correction or feedback from others without becoming defensive or resentful

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

Structured Daily Inventory

A Complete Framework for End-of-Day Review

How to Use This

Use this tonight before bed, and repeat each evening for seven consecutive days. Write honestly and specifically — generalities are the enemy of good inventory.

Day 1 — Evening Inventory

WHERE WAS I WRONG TODAY?

Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, fear

WHERE WAS I RIGHT TODAY?

Integrity, kindness, honesty, courage, service

WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION?

Amends to make, conversations to have, wrongs to admit

WHAT AM I GRATEFUL FOR?

Specific, concrete gratitude — not generalities

Day 2 — Evening Inventory

WHERE WAS I WRONG TODAY?

Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, fear

WHERE WAS I RIGHT TODAY?

Integrity, kindness, honesty, courage, service

WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION?

Amends to make, conversations to have, wrongs to admit

WHAT AM I GRATEFUL FOR?

Specific, concrete gratitude — not generalities

Day 3 — Evening Inventory

WHERE WAS I WRONG TODAY?

Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, fear

WHERE WAS I RIGHT TODAY?

Integrity, kindness, honesty, courage, service

WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION?

Amends to make, conversations to have, wrongs to admit

WHAT AM I GRATEFUL FOR?

Specific, concrete gratitude — not generalities

Day 4 — Evening Inventory

WHERE WAS I WRONG TODAY?

Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, fear

WHERE WAS I RIGHT TODAY?

Integrity, kindness, honesty, courage, service

WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION?

Amends to make, conversations to have, wrongs to admit

WHAT AM I GRATEFUL FOR?

Specific, concrete gratitude — not generalities

Day 5 — Evening Inventory

WHERE WAS I WRONG TODAY?

Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, fear

WHERE WAS I RIGHT TODAY?

Integrity, kindness, honesty, courage, service

WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION?

Amends to make, conversations to have, wrongs to admit

WHAT AM I GRATEFUL FOR?

Specific, concrete gratitude — not generalities

Day 6 — Evening Inventory

WHERE WAS I WRONG TODAY?

Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, fear

WHERE WAS I RIGHT TODAY?

Integrity, kindness, honesty, courage, service

WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION?

Amends to make, conversations to have, wrongs to admit

WHAT AM I GRATEFUL FOR?

Specific, concrete gratitude — not generalities

Day 7 — Evening Inventory

WHERE WAS I WRONG TODAY?

Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, fear

WHERE WAS I RIGHT TODAY?

Integrity, kindness, honesty, courage, service

WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION?

Amends to make, conversations to have, wrongs to admit

WHAT AM I GRATEFUL FOR?

Specific, concrete gratitude — not generalities

7-Day Inventory Review

1. Looking across all seven days, what patterns do you notice? Which defect appeared most frequently?

2. What was your most consistent strength across the week? How can you build on it?

3. Were there wrongs you identified but did not address? What prevented you from taking action?

4. How did the practice of daily inventory affect your awareness during the day?

5. What adjustments will you make to sustain this practice going forward? Be specific.

YOUR EXERCISE

Prompt Admission Practice

The Art of Owning It — Quickly and Completely

Why Promptness Matters

The word 'promptly' in Step Ten is not accidental. The longer a wrong goes unaddressed, the harder it becomes to admit. A wrong admitted in the moment is a brief correction; the same wrong admitted a week later is a full-scale amend.

Barriers to Prompt Admission

Rate each barrier and reflect on how it operates in your life.

Pride — "I shouldn't have to apologize because I was justified"

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Fear of Vulnerability — "Admitting I'm wrong makes me weak"

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Defensiveness — "If they hadn't done X, I wouldn't have done Y"

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Perfectionism — "If I admit this wrong, it means I'm a failure"

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Waiting — "I'll deal with it later when things calm down"

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Minimizing — "It wasn't that bad, they probably didn't even notice"

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Practice Scenarios

For each scenario, write out what a genuine, prompt admission would sound like.

Scenario: You were short-tempered with your partner this morning because you were stressed about work.

Write out the prompt admission — exactly what you would say:

Scenario: You gossiped about a fellow member of your recovery community.

Write out the prompt admission — exactly what you would say:

Scenario: You agreed to help someone, then didn't follow through.

Write out the prompt admission — exactly what you would say:

Scenario: You were dishonest about how much you spent on a purchase.

Write out the prompt admission — exactly what you would say:

Scenario: You took credit for something at work that was partially someone else's idea.

Write out the prompt admission — exactly what you would say:

Your Real Prompt Admissions

Identify three wrongs from YOUR recent life that need to be promptly admitted.

ADMISSION 1

What did you do? Be specific and honest.

Describe the wrong...

Who was affected? How?

Name who was impacted...

Write the admission. When will you deliver it?

Write the exact words and commit to a timeframe...

ADMISSION 2

What did you do? Be specific and honest.

Describe the wrong...

Who was affected? How?

Name who was impacted...

Write the admission. When will you deliver it?

Write the exact words and commit to a timeframe...

ADMISSION 3

What did you do? Be specific and honest.

Describe the wrong...

Who was affected? How?

Name who was impacted...

Write the admission. When will you deliver it?

Write the exact words and commit to a timeframe...

PART 4 OF 5 · READING

Character Defects in Daily Life: The Inventory Targets

Step Ten inventory has specific targets. The NA Basic Text consistently identifies certain patterns of thinking and behavior that, left unchecked, erode recovery and create conditions for relapse.

SELFISHNESS AND SELF-CENTEREDNESS

Self-centeredness is the lens through which everything is filtered: "How does this affect me?" In daily life: interrupting people, making someone else's crisis about you, steering conversations back to yourself, making decisions based solely on your own comfort.

DISHONESTY

Dishonesty in recovery is rarely the dramatic lie. It is far more commonly: omission (leaving out the parts that make you look bad), exaggeration, people-pleasing, image management, saying "I'm fine" when you are not, intellectual dishonesty.

RESENTMENT

Resentment is re-feeling — replaying offenses, nurturing grievances, keeping score. In daily life: replaying arguments in your head, making mental lists of what people have done wrong, passive-aggression. The NA Basic Text identifies resentment as particularly dangerous because it is self-reinforcing.

FEAR

Fear is the most subtle and pervasive inventory target because it disguises itself as other things. Fear appears as: procrastination, perfectionism, control, people-pleasing, isolation, anger, comparison, defensiveness. The inventory question: "Where did fear drive my behavior today?"

These four — selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear — are the primary targets of Step Ten inventory. The point is not to create an exhaustive list of flaws but to develop the habit of honest self-examination that catches patterns before they become crises.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of the four primary defects is most active in your daily life right now?

2. Can you identify a recent example of "quiet" self-centeredness — socially acceptable but driven by self-interest?

3. Where is dishonesty by omission showing up in your life?

4. What resentment are you currently carrying? How is the self-reinforcing cycle affecting your recovery?

5. Name one decision you made this week that was driven by fear. What would you have done if fear were not a factor?

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 4 OF 5

Emotional Regulation & Balance

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I am aware of my emotional state throughout the day, not just at crisis points

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I can experience uncomfortable emotions without immediately needing to escape, numb, or act on them

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. I recognize when I am operating from fear and can pause before reacting

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. I maintain emotional stability even when people around me are in chaos

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. I do not allow my mood to dictate my behavior — I can feel angry without acting angry

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. I have healthy outlets for processing difficult emotions (journaling, talking, meetings, prayer)
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
7. I can identify the HALT states (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired) before they destabilize me
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
8. I am growing in my ability to sit with discomfort rather than creating drama or conflict to discharge it
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

CHECK YOURSELF · CHECK-IN 5 OF 5

Relational Awareness & Accountability

Scale: 1 = Not at all · 2 = A little · 3 = Somewhat · 4 = Quite a bit · 5 = Very much

1. I monitor how my behavior affects the people around me, not just how their behavior affects me
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
2. I check my motives in relationships — am I being giving or manipulative, honest or people-pleasing?
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
3. I communicate openly rather than expecting others to read my mind or guess my needs
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
4. I can accept responsibility in relationship conflicts without either taking all the blame or assigning all the blame
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
5. I am aware of patterns of control, people-pleasing, or withdrawal in my relationships
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
6. I ask for help when I need it rather than isolating or pretending I have it all together
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
7. I practice honesty in relationships even when it is uncomfortable
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
8. I can set boundaries without guilt and accept boundaries without resentment
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

YOUR EXERCISE

Character Defect Tracker

Naming It, Claiming It, Examining It

The Purpose

You cannot address what you cannot name. This exercise helps you identify specific character defects that show up in YOUR daily life — not as abstract concepts, but as concrete behaviors you can recognize and change.

Selfishness / Self-Centeredness

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

Putting your needs first inappropriately, making things about you, expecting special treatment, keeping score

How active is this defect in your life right now?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Give a specific, recent example of this defect in action.

What is the cost of this defect?

What is the corresponding character asset?

Dishonesty

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

Lying, omitting, exaggerating, people-pleasing, image management, saying "I'm fine" when you're not

How active is this defect in your life right now?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Give a specific, recent example of this defect in action.

What is the cost of this defect?

What is the corresponding character asset?

Resentment

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

Holding grudges, replaying offenses, scorekeeping, passive-aggression, gossip, refusing to forgive

How active is this defect in your life right now?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Give a specific, recent example of this defect in action.

What is the cost of this defect?

What is the corresponding character asset?

Fear

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

Procrastination, perfectionism, control, people-pleasing, isolation, defensiveness, avoidance

How active is this defect in your life right now?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Give a specific, recent example of this defect in action.

What is the cost of this defect?

What is the corresponding character asset?

Pride / Grandiosity

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

Refusing help, pretending to have it together, inability to admit mistakes, dismissing feedback

How active is this defect in your life right now?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Give a specific, recent example of this defect in action.

What is the cost of this defect?

What is the corresponding character asset?

Self-Pity

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

"Poor me" thinking, feeling uniquely burdened, comparing unfavorably to others, victimhood

How active is this defect in your life right now?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Give a specific, recent example of this defect in action.

What is the cost of this defect?

What is the corresponding character asset?

Laziness / Complacency**COMMON EXPRESSIONS**

Cutting corners on recovery, skipping meetings, avoiding step work, coasting on past effort

How active is this defect in your life right now?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Give a specific, recent example of this defect in action.

What is the cost of this defect?

What is the corresponding character asset?

Impatience / Intolerance

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

Wanting results now, frustration with others' pace, irritability at inconvenience

How active is this defect in your life right now?

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Give a specific, recent example of this defect in action.

What is the cost of this defect?

What is the corresponding character asset?

Defect Pattern Summary

1. Which defect scored highest in activity level? Is this the one you expected?

2. Which defect do you most minimize or deny? Why might you resist seeing it clearly?

3. How do your top two defects interact? Do they feed each other?

4. What would your closest people — sponsor, partner, family — say is your most active defect?

YOUR EXERCISE

Resentment Release Inventory

Identifying, Examining, and Releasing What You're Holding

The Poison of Resentment

Resentment is the 'number one offender' in recovery literature — it kills more recovering addicts than any other emotional state. This inventory helps you identify what you're carrying, examine your part, and begin the process of release.

A person you are currently resentful toward

Who or what are you resentful toward?

What happened? What is the cause?

What part of you does this affect? (Self-esteem, security, pride, fear?)

What is YOUR part? (Even if it's small.)

What would it look like to release this resentment?

An institution or system you resent

Who or what are you resentful toward?

What happened? What is the cause?

What part of you does this affect? (Self-esteem, security, pride, fear?)

What is YOUR part? (Even if it's small.)

What would it look like to release this resentment?

A situation or life circumstance you resent

Who or what are you resentful toward?

What happened? What is the cause?

What part of you does this affect? (Self-esteem, security, pride, fear?)

What is YOUR part? (Even if it's small.)

What would it look like to release this resentment?

Something you resent about yourself

Who or what are you resentful toward?

What happened? What is the cause?

What part of you does this affect? (Self-esteem, security, pride, fear?)

What is YOUR part? (Even if it's small.)

What would it look like to release this resentment?

An old resentment that keeps returning

Who or what are you resentful toward?

What happened? What is the cause?

What part of you does this affect? (Self-esteem, security, pride, fear?)

What is YOUR part? (Even if it's small.)

What would it look like to release this resentment?

Resentment Inventory Summary

1. Which resentment is costing you the most energy? How is it affecting your recovery and peace?

2. Looking at your "my part" entries, do you notice a pattern? Are the same defects showing up across multiple resentments?

3. Which resentment would you most benefit from discussing with your sponsor?

4. Write a prayer or intention for release. You don't have to feel it yet — just state your willingness to move toward it.

YOUR EXERCISE

Fear Inventory & Action Plan

Uncovering the Fear Behind the Behavior

Fear: The Root System

Fear is the root system beneath most character defects. Selfishness grows from fear of not having enough. Dishonesty grows from fear of rejection. This inventory helps you trace behaviors back to the fears that drive them.

Fear of Rejection

COMMON DISGUISES

People-pleasing, saying yes when you mean no, avoiding conflict, changing yourself to be accepted

How active is this fear right now? (1 = barely present, 5 = significantly driving behavior)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this fear show up in your daily life?

What would you do differently if this fear did not exist?

Name ONE action you can take this week to act IN SPITE of this fear.

Fear of Failure

COMMON DISGUISES

Procrastination, perfectionism, not trying, self-sabotage, lowering expectations

How active is this fear right now? (1 = barely present, 5 = significantly driving behavior)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this fear show up in your daily life?

What would you do differently if this fear did not exist?

Name ONE action you can take this week to act IN SPITE of this fear.

Fear of Success

COMMON DISGUISES

Self-sabotage, imposter syndrome, not following through, "I don't deserve this" thinking

How active is this fear right now? (1 = barely present, 5 = significantly driving behavior)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this fear show up in your daily life?

What would you do differently if this fear did not exist?

Name ONE action you can take this week to act IN SPITE of this fear.

Fear of Vulnerability

COMMON DISGUISES

Emotional walls, humor as deflection, intellectualizing, avoiding intimacy

How active is this fear right now? (1 = barely present, 5 = significantly driving behavior)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this fear show up in your daily life?

What would you do differently if this fear did not exist?

Name ONE action you can take this week to act IN SPITE of this fear.

Fear of Change

COMMON DISGUISES

Clinging to familiar pain, resistance to new experiences, complacency

How active is this fear right now? (1 = barely present, 5 = significantly driving behavior)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this fear show up in your daily life?

What would you do differently if this fear did not exist?

Name ONE action you can take this week to act IN SPITE of this fear.

Fear of Not Being Enough

COMMON DISGUISES

Comparison, overachieving, people-pleasing, perfectionism, chronic self-doubt

How active is this fear right now? (1 = barely present, 5 = significantly driving behavior)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

How does this fear show up in your daily life?

What would you do differently if this fear did not exist?

Name ONE action you can take this week to act IN SPITE of this fear.

Fear Pattern Summary

1. Which fear is most active right now? How has it been directing your behavior without your conscious awareness?

2. Is there a "master fear" underneath many of the others? A core fear that generates the rest?

3. How has your relationship with fear changed since entering recovery?

4. Write a statement to your fear: acknowledge it, but declare your intention to act in spite of it.

YOUR EXERCISE

Relational Inventory

How Am I Showing Up in My Relationships?

Why Relationships Matter in Step Ten

Recovery happens in relationship. Our character defects cause the most damage in our interactions with other people. Step Ten relational inventory examines how you are showing up — your patterns of engagement and default roles.

Your most significant relationship (partner, spouse, closest person)

Who is this person? What is the current state of this relationship?

Where are you being honest? Where are you being dishonest, even subtly?

What is your default role? (Caretaker, controller, victim, avoider, people-pleaser?)

What would this relationship look like if you brought your best recovery self to it consistently?

A family relationship that is challenging

Who is this person? What is the current state of this relationship?

Where are you being honest? Where are you being dishonest, even subtly?

What is your default role? (Caretaker, controller, victim, avoider, people-pleaser?)

What would this relationship look like if you brought your best recovery self to it consistently?

A friendship or recovery relationship

Who is this person? What is the current state of this relationship?

Where are you being honest? Where are you being dishonest, even subtly?

What is your default role? (Caretaker, controller, victim, avoider, people-pleaser?)

What would this relationship look like if you brought your best recovery self to it consistently?

A work or professional relationship

Who is this person? What is the current state of this relationship?

Where are you being honest? Where are you being dishonest, even subtly?

What is your default role? (Caretaker, controller, victim, avoider, people-pleaser?)

What would this relationship look like if you brought your best recovery self to it consistently?

Your relationship with yourself

Who is this person? What is the current state of this relationship?

Where are you being honest? Where are you being dishonest, even subtly?

What is your default role? (Caretaker, controller, victim, avoider, people-pleaser?)

What would this relationship look like if you brought your best recovery self to it consistently?

Relational Pattern Summary

1. What pattern appears across multiple relationships? What does that tell you about yourself?

2. Which relationship needs the most attention right now? What is the most important thing you could do this week?

3. Where do you most struggle to be honest in relationships? What are you protecting?

4. How has your relationship with yourself changed in recovery?

YOUR EXERCISE

Pattern Recognition Review

Seeing the Cycles Before They Complete

Breaking the Cycle

Recovery is not just about individual behaviors — it's about patterns. Step Ten's power lies in pattern recognition: seeing the same cycle repeat and intervening before it reaches its destructive conclusion.

Resentment → Isolation → Self-Pity

THE PATTERN

Something offends you. Instead of addressing it, you withdraw. In isolation, resentment grows into self-pity. The cycle accelerates.

How active is this cycle in your life? (1 = rarely, 5 = frequently)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe a specific recent time this cycle played out. Be detailed.

Where is the intervention point? At what stage could you pause and choose differently?

Fear → Control → Conflict

THE PATTERN

You feel afraid about an outcome. You try to control the situation or people. Control creates resistance and conflict. Conflict increases fear.

How active is this cycle in your life? (1 = rarely, 5 = frequently)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe a specific recent time this cycle played out. Be detailed.

Where is the intervention point? At what stage could you pause and choose differently?

Dishonesty → Shame → More Dishonesty

THE PATTERN

You are dishonest about something. The dishonesty creates shame. Shame makes honesty feel more dangerous. The gap between who you appear to be and who you are widens.

How active is this cycle in your life? (1 = rarely, 5 = frequently)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe a specific recent time this cycle played out. Be detailed.

Where is the intervention point? At what stage could you pause and choose differently?

People-Pleasing → Resentment → Explosion

THE PATTERN

You say yes when you mean no. You overcommit. Resentment builds because others "don't appreciate" what you're doing. Eventually you explode.

How active is this cycle in your life? (1 = rarely, 5 = frequently)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe a specific recent time this cycle played out. Be detailed.

Where is the intervention point? At what stage could you pause and choose differently?

Complacency → Drift → Crisis

THE PATTERN

Recovery stabilizes and you begin to coast. You skip meetings, neglect prayer/meditation, stop calling your sponsor. You don't notice the drift until a crisis.

How active is this cycle in your life? (1 = rarely, 5 = frequently)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe a specific recent time this cycle played out. Be detailed.

Where is the intervention point? At what stage could you pause and choose differently?

Comparison → Inadequacy → Overcompensation

THE PATTERN

You compare yourself to others and feel inadequate. To compensate, you overwork or overperform. Exhaustion sets in. You compare again.

How active is this cycle in your life? (1 = rarely, 5 = frequently)

☐ 1 Not at all ☐ 2 A little ☐ 3 Somewhat ☐ 4 Quite a bit ☐ 5 Very much

Describe a specific recent time this cycle played out. Be detailed.

Where is the intervention point? At what stage could you pause and choose differently?

Pattern Recognition Summary

1. Which cycle scored highest? Is this a pattern you were already aware of, or seeing clearly for the first time?

2. What is the common entry point for your most active cycles? (Usually an emotion: resentment, fear, shame, or loneliness.)

3. Who in your life could help you recognize these patterns in real time?

4. Write a commitment: "When I notice myself at the beginning of [specific cycle], I will [specific intervention]."

PART 5 OF 5 · READING

Freedom Through Vigilance: The Promises of Step Ten

Step Ten is sometimes misunderstood as a burden. This misunderstanding misses the point entirely. Step Ten is not a punishment; it is a liberation technology.

FREEDOM FROM THE PAST

Consistent Step Ten practice means you no longer accumulate the kind of emotional, relational, and spiritual wreckage that requires another formal Fourth and Fifth Step. When you deal with today's wrongs today, you stay current with yourself.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

When you practice honest self-examination daily, you discover something remarkable: there is nothing inside you that you cannot face. The power of shame lies in secrecy. Step Ten removes the secrecy.

FREEDOM IN RELATIONSHIPS

When you promptly admit wrongs, you remove the single greatest obstacle to genuine intimacy: the defensive posture. Prompt admission — "I was wrong. I am sorry. I will do differently" — short-circuits the entire destructive cycle.

FREEDOM FROM THE NEED TO BE RIGHT

Step Ten gradually dissolves the ego's need to be right. When you practice admitting wrongs daily, you discover that being wrong is not catastrophic. This makes you teachable, adaptable, and remarkably easier to be around.

EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY

Perhaps the greatest promise of Step Ten practice is emotional sobriety — the ability to navigate life's emotional terrain without being controlled by it. Emotional sobriety means you can feel angry without being destructive, afraid without being paralyzed, joyful without waiting for the other shoe to drop.

THE PARADOX OF VIGILANCE

The paradox of Step Ten is that vigilance creates freedom. The person who does not practice Step Ten is exhausted by the resentments they carry and the wreckage they create. The person who practices Step Ten is lighter, freer, and more energetically available for life.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of the promises of Step Ten resonates most deeply with your current experience?

2. Have you experienced the "paradox of vigilance" — that self-examination creates freedom rather than burden?

3. Where in your life would "prompt admission of wrongs" transform a relationship or recurring conflict?

4. How would emotional sobriety change your daily experience?

5. Write a statement of commitment to Step Ten practice. What will you do, when, and who will hold you accountable?

YOUR EXERCISE

Character Assets Inventory

A Balanced Inventory Includes Your Strengths

Why Assets Matter

Step Ten is not just about identifying wrongs — it is about recognizing strengths. A balanced inventory prevents self-examination from becoming self-punishment.

Honesty

Where did you tell the truth this week — even when it was uncomfortable or could have been avoided?

How has recovery helped this asset grow?

What would it look like to practice this asset more intentionally this week?

Humility

When did you admit you were wrong, ask for help, or recognize that you don't have all the answers?

How has recovery helped this asset grow?

What would it look like to practice this asset more intentionally this week?

Courage

When did you do the right thing even though you were afraid? Where did you take a risk for your recovery?

How has recovery helped this asset grow?

What would it look like to practice this asset more intentionally this week?

Compassion

When did you show kindness to someone who was struggling — including yourself?

How has recovery helped this asset grow?

What would it look like to practice this asset more intentionally this week?

Integrity

Where did your actions match your values? When did you do the right thing even when nobody was watching?

How has recovery helped this asset grow?

What would it look like to practice this asset more intentionally this week?

Generosity

Where did you give without expectation of return — your time, attention, resources, or support?

How has recovery helped this asset grow?

What would it look like to practice this asset more intentionally this week?

Perseverance

Where did you keep going when you wanted to quit? When did you show up despite not feeling like it?

How has recovery helped this asset grow?

What would it look like to practice this asset more intentionally this week?

Gratitude

When did you actively recognize and appreciate what you have rather than focusing on what you lack?

How has recovery helped this asset grow?

What would it look like to practice this asset more intentionally this week?

Assets Reflection

1. Which character asset has grown the most since you entered recovery?

2. Which asset is hardest for you to acknowledge in yourself? Why might you resist seeing your own strengths?

3. How does recognizing your assets change the way you approach Step Ten inventory?

4. Write an affirmation: "I am someone who struggles with ____ AND who is growing in ____."
